DDJC Assists in Proving Effectiveness of Passive RFID

New RFID Technology to Enhance Supply Chain Visibility

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC) recently hosted a Department of Defense (DoD) demonstration on the use of passive Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) as it applies to providing total asset visibility throughout the distribution pipeline.

DDC Commander BG Kathleen Gainey, USA, uses a hand-held RFID scanner to verify inventory during the demonstration at DDJC.

The culmination of a three year project involving the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Auto-ID Center and DLA, the technical demonstration provided insight into the feasibility of using RFID tags to identify items.

The key element is the electronic product code (EPC), a unique identifier, which is stored on a microchip. Electronic tags hold the microchip and antenna. When a tag is read, the EPC is transmitted wirelessly to a computer. The item, and any information associated with the EPC, can be provided via the Internet. Sensor integration and tamper detection features on tags also provide the capability to monitor the status of an item, pallet, or container by detecting temperature, vibration, rough handling, and chemical or biological contamination.

The demonstration was conducted by the Natick Soldier Center's Combat Feeding Directorate which is a joint-service program responsible for meeting the unique combat feeding requirements of each military service.

Major objectives achieved in the four-day demonstration included the ability to track inventory in an end-to-end supply chain and to provide an assessment of ration quality by using RFID tags.

The RFID demonstration captured real-time data at ten logistic nodes representing various locations throughout the supply chain-from the time the product leaves the manufacturer to the point at which it is received by the end user.

The demonstration started with passive RFID tags applied to cases of meals ready to eat (MREs) and Unitized Group Rations (UGRs). The RFID tags were used to identify each case and pallet via the EPC.

The data from those EPCs was then electronically associated with the seavan container as it was loaded, providing an electronic record of the contents of the container.

During the initial process, a stand alone inventory system was automatically adjusted as products were received and shipped to simulate visibility in DoD systems.

Containers were then hauled around the outside of a warehouse to simulate transport and passed through portals equipped with RFID readers that recognize the information on the RFID tags and transmit that data to a server, indicating that the container was received. The container was then unloaded and stowed in a bulk storage area. As the demonstration continued, the pallets were moved through portal readers and into an issue area where they were loaded onto a flatbed trailer.

The trailer passed through portals at a direct support supply point-this would be the last stop before the shipment of MREs and UGRs would be issued to troops for consumption. Here, individual unit requisitions were assembled and scanned using a hand held reader and individual case EPCs were associated with the unit as they were issued.

Ed Coyle of DLA's Enterprise Solutions Office indicates RFID equipment while speaking with Alan Estevez, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Supply Chain Integration.

According to Alan Estevez, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Supply Chain Integration, the demonstration successfully completed the definitive RFID proof of principle that will dramatically enhance DoD's capability for end-to-end logistics. Results of the demonstration will be used to support DoD's RFID Policy Business Rules for the use of RFID in DoD.

According to Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Logistics and Material Readiness, Bradley Berkson, "The recent work at DDJC continues to demonstrate the value and opportunities for transforming the DoD supply chain."

The primary benefit of using RFID tags for this purpose will be reduced supply chain costs. Viewed as the most promising, low-cost commercial logistics solution, numerous industry and DoD-sponsored pilots to implement and deploy passive RFID are underway. DoD will benefit from this technology by adopting an industry solution to increase the efficiency of total asset visibility.

DDC Begins New Customer Relationship Management Certificate Program

DDC AND DDSP STUDENTS ATTEND THEIR FIRST CLASS - EFFECTIVE SPEECH

By Stacy L. Umstead, DDC Command Affairs

Ms. Louise Morgan, M.M.C., Penn State Instructor for Effective Speech.

On January 29, 2004, the 2nd Penn State University and Defense Distribution Center (DDC) Certificate Program, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), kicked off with 20 employees from the DDC and the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) in attendance for their first Effective Speech class.

Effective Speech is an introduction to speech communication, formal speaking, group discussion, analysis and evaluation of messages. The course introduces basic theories of speech communication and provides practical experience in speaking in inter-personal, group, and public situations.

This semester's instructor is Ms. Louise Morgan, M.M.C., who brings a wealth of knowledge and background to the class. Morgan holds a bachelor's degree in Theatre and a master's degree in Communication. Her work experience includes everything from microwave oven demonstrator to playwright to freelance writer and professor.

In her introduction to the class, Morgan comments, "Public Speaking is all about the mind, body, and spirit. The mind allows for critical thinking, the body is the channel for the message, and the spirit is what you will bring to what you are doing. I value strong writing capabilities as it will be very important in this speech class and I value performance and delivery. Together, in this class, we will develop a good program that will allow you to overcome the fear of public speaking."

"I bring something to this class, that is very different from what people expect - Yoga. My students will learn how to do deep breathing exercises relieving the anxiety and stress of public speaking; that is the biggest obstacle to overcome," states Morgan.

The students are equally excited. Kristy Farner, an employee of DDC Logistics Operations states, "We gave our first speech on the first night and I was nervous but I did better than I thought I would. This class wasn't at all what I expected—it is more. I'm very impressed with the instructor; she made everyone feel comfortable."

Karen Goodhart, another employee of DDC Logistics Operations, expressed her surprise at the impromptu speech on the first night, "I thought I was going to hyperventilate while in front of the class, but I made it. I think I will learn a lot from this course and hopefully will be more at ease when talking in front of an audience."

Effective Speech is one of five classes in the Penn State/DDC CRM Certificate Program that continues through Fall of 2005. Other classes include Interpersonal Communication, Customer Relationship Management, Communication in Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, and Project Management.

This is the second certificate program being offered at the DDC. The Business Logistics Certificate Program was offered in 2001 with students graduating in August 2003.

DDC and DDSP employees interested in the CRM Program may contact Ms. Carrie Case at (717) 770-6566.

DDC and DDSP employees learn the objectives and expectations of Effective Speech class.